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Security Council

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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 8327th meeting of the Security Council, held on 10 August 2018, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "Peace consolidation in West Africa", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council takes note of the report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel (UNOWAS) and the briefing on 17 July 2018 by the Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel, Mohamed Ibn Chambas.

"The Security Council recalls its resolutions 2423 (2018), 2391 (2017), 2359 (2017), 2349 (2017) and 2320 (2016), as well as its presidential statements S/PRST/2017/2, S/PRST/2017/10 and S/PRST/2018/3.

"The Security Council expresses full support to the Special Representative, in carrying out his mandate, and ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS. The Security Council notes the increased demands on UNOWAS and continues to underline the need for sustained support and adequate resources in this regard. The Security Council encourages further cooperation, mutual prioritization and a clear division of tasks among various UN offices, agencies and departments, in particular UNOWAS and the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA), in addressing conflict prevention and sustaining peace in West Africa and the Sahel.

"The Security Council reiterates its recognition of the role of UNOWAS in contributing to continuous strategic and integrated analysis of the opportunities, risks and challenges in support of efforts by national and local actors to sustain peace, looks forward to efforts to enhance ongoing activities undertaken by UNOWAS in the area of conflict prevention, including the development of comprehensive early warning analyses, mediation and good offices, and efforts to enhance subregional capacities to cooperate in this regard, in particular the joint African Union (AU), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) cooperation on early warning systems.

"The Security Council reiterates its strong commitment to the sovereignty, independence, unity and territorial integrity of all countries in West Africa and the Sahel.

"The Security Council emphasizes the need for national stakeholders to work together to facilitate the timely preparation for, and holding of, peaceful,

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transparent and credible elections, and urges them to ensure a level playing field for all candidates and to work towards increased participation of women, including with a view to increase the number of women appointed to senior government positions, in accordance with their respective constitutions and national, regional and global commitments.

"The Security Council welcomes continued regional efforts to assist national stakeholders in Togo in to overcome their differences peacefully through dialogue and in line with the democratic aspirations of the Togolese people.

"The Security Council calls upon all political stakeholders in Guinea Bissau to uphold the provisions of the Conakry Accords and to complete its implementation without further delay, emphasizes the importance of the organization of inclusive, free, fair, transparent and credible legislative elections in Guinea-Bissau scheduled for November 2018 and reiterates the important role of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Guinea-Bissau (UNIOGBIS) in this regard.

"The Security Council welcomes continued international engagement to support the authorities and people of the Gambia in their efforts towards consolidating peace, carrying out political reforms, participating in the security sector reform and transitional justice processes, supporting the implementation of the National Development Plan and regional integration in West Africa.

"The Security Council encourages the consolidation of ongoing political reforms in the region to prevent violence and instability, as well as progress in the area of national reconciliation, in particular in the Mano River Basin region and in other countries that have recently undergone democratic transitions, and further welcomes the closure of the United Nations Mission in Liberia (UNMIL) and the peaceful transition in Liberia. The Security Council underlines the need for the United Nations to sustain support in this regard including in non-mission settings, and further emphasizes the importance of the convening role of the Peacebuilding Commission in sustaining peace and peacebuilding efforts.

"The Security Council emphasizes the important role of women in prevention and resolution of conflicts, in peacebuilding as well as in post-conflict situations, as recognized in relevant Security Council resolutions including resolution 1325 (2000) and resolution 2242 (2015).

"The Security Council welcomes the recent high-level UN-AU mission to the Sahel and emphasizes the need for an integrated gender perspective in the design and implementation of comprehensive strategies to address the root causes of the crisis. The Security Council welcomes efforts by UNOWAS and ECOWAS to work towards the systematic involvement of women in initiatives to counter terrorism and prevent violent extremism, as and when conducive to terrorism, and further requests that these issues continue to be integrated into regular reporting by UNOWAS.

"The Security Council reiterates its serious concern over the challenging security situation in West Africa and the Sahel, notably threats posed by terrorism, maritime piracy, conflicts between pastoralists and farmers, and transnational organized crime, including trafficking in persons, arms and drugs and illegal exploitation of natural resources, which can be interlinked, and welcomes UNOWAS efforts to support regional analysis and early warning mechanisms. The Security Council further welcomes the successful holding of the Joint Summit of ECOWAS and ECCAS on Peace, Security, Stability and the Fight against Terrorism and Violent Extremism held in Lomé, Togo, on 30 July,

as well as the commitment of their Member States to strengthen cooperation on key peace and security challenges.

"The Security Council welcomes the leadership demonstrated by countries in West Africa and the Sahel in spearheading initiatives to address security challenges in the region and commends the efforts of the African Union and ECOWAS, as well as of Member States of West Africa and the Sahel, to strengthen security in border regions and regional cooperation, as well as to address the impact of terrorism and transnational organized crime, including through the Multinational Joint Task Force (MNJTF) and the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel (FC-G5S). The Security Council reaffirms that Member States must ensure that any measures taken to counter terrorism comply with all their obligations under international law, in particular international human rights law, international refugee law and international humanitarian law, and in this regard encourages UNOWAS to strengthen its support towards greater effectiveness and accountability in security sector governance and reform efforts in the region. The Security Council underlines the need for security efforts to be aligned with political objectives, to enable the restoration of civilian security, the establishment of effective governance to deliver essential services, and the revival of local economics to provide livelihood opportunities for surging youth populations. The Security Council encourages ECOWAS and the G5 Sahel to identify areas of complementarity in preventing conflict and sustaining peace in the region, and further recalls the important role of UNOWAS in providing technical assistance to the Permanent Secretariat of the G5 Sahel.

"The Security Council expresses its concern for increased tensions between pastoralists and farmers in the region driven by competition for natural resources, rapid population growth, weak governance, pressures related to climate and ecological factors, and the circulation of small arms and light weapons, and encourages ECOWAS and its Member States, with the support of UNOWAS, to address these challenges in a coordinated and holistic manner. The Security Council further expresses its deep concern about the intensification of intercommunal violence in Central Mali and underlines that stabilization of the situation in this region requires a fully integrated response encompassing simultaneous pursuit of progress on security, governance, development, reconciliation, as well as protection and promotion of human rights.

"The Security Council recalls that the illicit transfer, destabilizing accumulation and misuse of small arms and light weapons continue to pose threats to international peace and security, cause significant loss of lives, and contribute to instability and security in many regions, including in West Africa and the Sahel.

"The Security Council reaffirms its condemnation in the strongest terms of all instances of trafficking in persons, including for the purpose of forced labour and slavery, in areas affected by armed conflict, which undermine the rule of law, contribute to other forms of transnational organized crime and may exacerbate conflict, insecurity and instability and undermine development. The Security Council reiterates the need to ensure organization and coherence in the efforts of the United Nations System to address trafficking in persons in areas affected by armed conflict or in post-conflict situations, and further recognizes the need to continue to work towards an enhanced, comprehensive and coordinated approach. The Security Council encourages further cooperation between the EU, AU and UN, in particular within the joint Task Force, aimed at saving and protecting lives of migrants and refugees along routes, and in particular inside Libya.

"The Security Council expresses concern over the overall humanitarian situation in the region, characterized by the impact of armed conflict and terrorism, extreme poverty, food insecurity, including conflict-induced hunger and threat of famine, forced displacement, human rights violations and abuses, sexual and gender-based violence, adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes, natural disasters and epidemics, which contribute to the high levels of structural, chronic and acute vulnerability in the region and continue to affect populations, and call for significant humanitarian and development action as well as the disbursement of previously pledged funds. The Security Council welcomes efforts of the Governments in the Lake Chad Basin Region and regional and sub-regional organizations to prevent further deterioration of the humanitarian crisis, while recognizing the need for enhanced national efforts to address the vast humanitarian needs.

"The Security Council recognizes the adverse effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters among other factors on the stability of West Africa and the Sahel region, including through drought, desertification, land degradation and food insecurity, continues to stress the need for long-term strategies by governments and the United Nations, based on risk assessments, to support stabilization and build resilience, and further requests that such information be taken into consideration by UNOWAS in its activities.

"The Security Council stresses the need for strengthening collective engagement across the Sahel region, in line with existing frameworks, and in this regard welcomes the strengthened cooperation between the UN and the AU, in particular through the Joint UN-AU Framework for Enhanced Partnership in Peace and Security and the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063, and takes note of the decision of the AU Peace and Security Council to reactivate the Nouakchott Process and the review of the AU Strategy for the Sahel.

"The Security Council underlines the need for a more integrated, cross-pillar approach across the development, humanitarian, and peace and security nexus, including to address root causes of crises, prevent further tensions and violence, tackle exclusion and poverty, strengthen resilience of institutions and communities, promote good governance and build peaceful, just and inclusive societies. The Security Council welcomes the collective United Nations efforts, under the leadership of the Deputy Secretary-General, towards recalibrating the United Nations Integrated Strategy for the Sahel (UNISS) to expedite its impact, in line with the needs of the Sahelian people and national and regional priorities, and in close collaboration with partners and countries of the region. The Security Council welcomes the appointment of the Secretary-General's Special Adviser for the Sahel and encourages efforts to foster greater coherence and coordination within the UN System as well as with partners in the region through the efficient implementation of the United Nations Support Plan for the Sahel, in coordination with the Special Representative and UNOWAS.

"The Security Council calls upon Member States and other actors to align their activities under the UNISS and join efforts in mobilizing the necessary resources to this end, and further requests the Secretary-General to keep it informed of the progress towards the implementation of the UN Support Plan for the Sahel in the next report on UNOWAS.

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to continue to provide information on UNOWAS efforts with respect to aspects highlighted in this statement, and reiterates its call for an assessment of the implementation of its resolution 2349 to be integrated into regular reporting by UNOWAS."